

History and Origin of Rugby, Illinois in Owego Township in Livingston County

By: Dale C. Maley

Last Updated: March 29, 2024

Quick Summary

Rugby was in the NW ¼ of the SW ¼ of Owego Township 28N 06E in Livingston County, Illinois. It was a stop on the Illinois Central Railroad connecting to Pontiac, Illinois. The village was 8 miles east of Pontiac. It appears to have never developed into an actual small village. It had a post office from 1880 to 1918. It had a grain elevator and 1 store. It had very few houses.

An article in the March 24, 1880, Pontiac Sentinel says the town was formed in 1880 and the citizens named it Rugby in honor of the school in one of Dickens' works. The 1880 date in this article coincides with the post office being formed in 1880.

The image shows a screenshot of a news article from the Pontiac Sentinel, dated March 24, 1880. The article is titled "Rugby." and discusses the naming of a town in Owego Township, Illinois, in honor of a school in Charles Dickens' works. The text reads:

Rugby.
The Owego siding on Section 12, Owego, has been named "Rugby" by the citizens in honor of the school in one of Dickens' works... A post office has been established and a daily mail will be delivered there as soon as the K. P. & W. road is prepared to run a mail train. A store building is now under way and the place promises to grow right along.

I google searched and could not find the name of the works by Charles Dickens that a school name Rugby in it?

ChatGPT: There isn't a work by Charles Dickens that mentions a school named Rugby. Rugby School is not a setting in any of Charles Dickens' novels. It was featured in "Tom Brown's School Days" by Thomas Hughes, not by Dickens.

So, maybe the writer of the 1880 Sentinel article had the wrong author?? Should have been Thomas Hughes, not Charles Dickens??

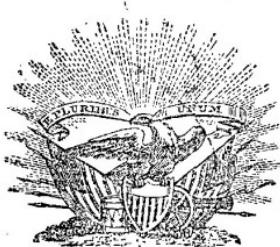
Who First bought the Farmland?

According to the 1893 Atlas of Livingston County, Rugby was in the NW 1/4 of the SW 1/4 of Section 12, 28N 06E, in Owego Township. According to the Federal database of first land purchases from the Federal Government:

	MW-0892-157	HALE, ANDREW T, THOMPSON, HANNIBAL	1/2/1856	87510	IL	3rd PM	028N - 006E	NW1/4SW1/4	12	Livingston
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Andrew T. Hale bought this land in 1857 using the method of purchasing a military land patent from Hannibal Thompson. Hannibal served in the Maine unit in the War of 1812.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT		PRIVATE CLAIMS		General Land Office Record			
	Search Documents	Reference Center	Support	Pathfinder	Shopping Cart		
▶ Search Documents ▶ Patent Details							
Accession Nr: MW-0892-157		Document Type: Military Warrant		State: Illinois	Issue Date: 1/2/1856 Cancelled: No		
Patent Details	Patent Image	Related Documents		Printer Friendly			
Names On Document HALE, ANDREW T, THOMPSON, HANNIBAL		Miscellaneous Information Land Office: Danville US Reservations: No Mineral Reservations: No Tribe: ... Militia: Captain Harlows Company Maine Militia State In Favor Of: ... Authority: September 28, 1850: ScripWarrant Act of 1850 (9 Stat. 520) General Remarks: ...					
Document Numbers Document Nr: 87510 Misc. Doc. Nr: ... BLM Serial Nr: ... Indian Allot. Nr: ... Coal Entry. Nr: ...		Survey Information Total Acres: 40.00 Survey Date: ... Geographic Name: ... Metes/Bounds: No					
Land Descriptions							
Map	State	Meridian	Twp - Rng	Aliquots	Section	Survey #	County
<input type="checkbox"/>	IL	3rd PM	028N - 006E	NW1/4SW1/4	12		Livingston



157.

The United States of America.

To all to whom these Presents shall come, Greeting:

Whereas, In pursuance of the Act of Congress approved September 28th, 1850.
entitled "An Act granting Bounty Land to certain Officers and Soldiers who have been engaged in the Military
Service of the United States," Warrant No. 87,570 for $\sim 160 \sim$ acres,

issued in favor of *Hannibal Thompson, Sergeant and Clerk in Captain Harton's
Company, Marine Militia, Mar 1812, and in Captain Gibson's Company
Anastasia Mar.*

has been returned to the GENERAL LAND OFFICE, with evidence that the same has been duly located upon the
*South-West quarter of the South-West quarter of Section twelve, in Township
Twenty-Eight North, of Range Six East, in the District of Lands subject
to Sale at Danville, Illinois, containing Forty acres;*

according to the Official Plat of the Survey of the said Lands returned to the GENERAL LAND OFFICE by
the SURVEYOR GENERAL: *which has been affixed to Andrew T. Hale,*

Now know ye, That there is therefore granted by the UNITED STATES unto the said
Andrew T. Hale,

the tract of Land above described: TO HAVE AND TO HOLD the said Tract of Land, with the appurtenances
thereof, unto the said *Andrew T. Hale, and to his*

heirs and assigns forever.

In Testimony Whereof, I, Franklin Pierce

PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, have caused these Letters to be made

In Testimony Whereof, I, Franklin Pierce

*PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, have caused these Letters to be made
Patent, and the SEAL of the GENERAL LAND OFFICE to be hereunto affixed.*

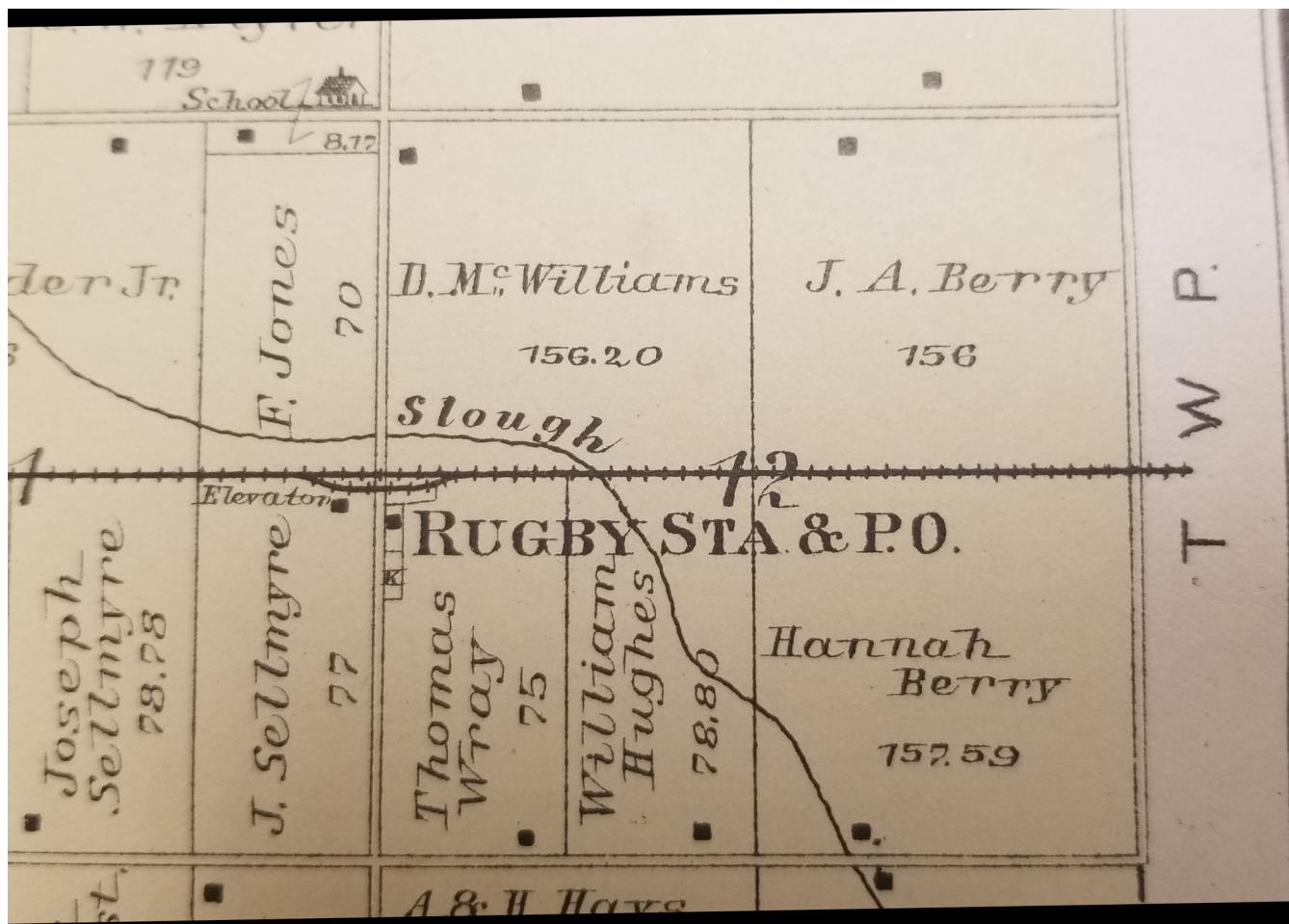
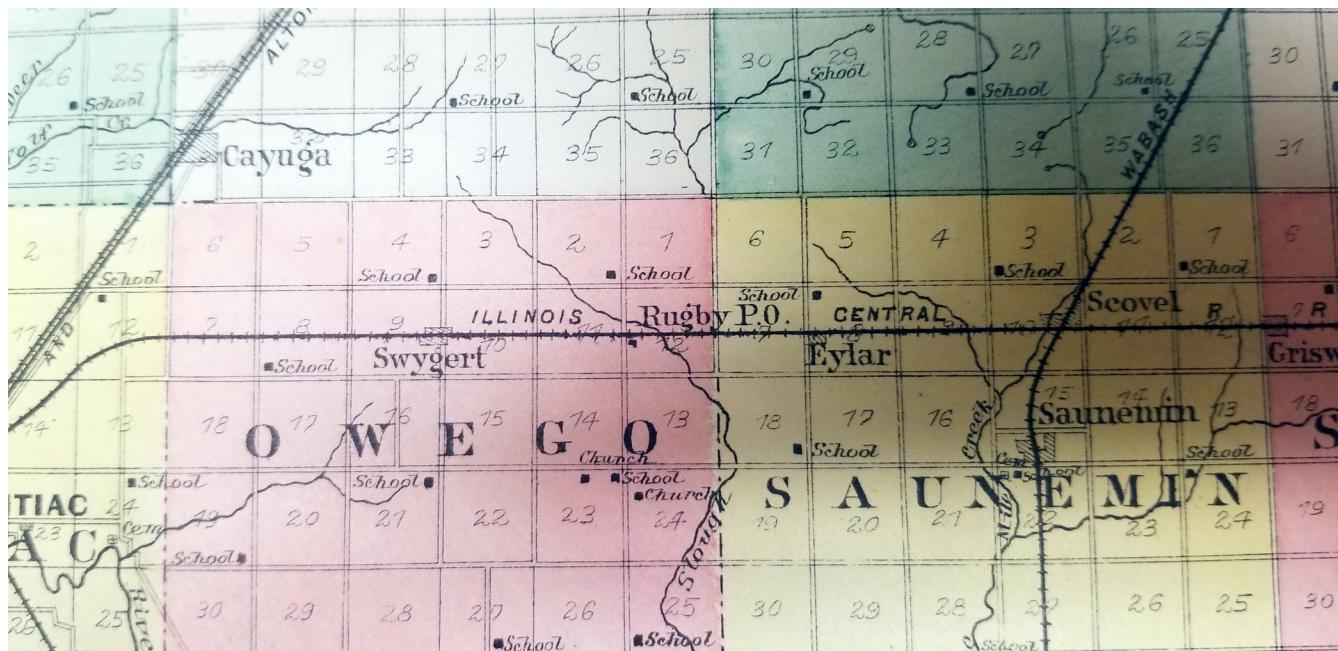
{
SEAL.
}

GIVEN under my hand, at the CITY OF WASHINGTON, the
Second day of *January*
in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred
and *fifty-six* and of the INDEPENDENCE
OF THE UNITED STATES the *seventy-Eighth*,

BY THE PRESIDENT, Franklin Pierce
By H. E. Baldwin asst Sec'y.
J. A. Granger Recorder of the General Land Office.

1893 Atlas of Livingston County

Andrew Hale bought quite a bit of land east of Pontiac. By 1893, the land he bought had changed ownership and is shown below.



By 1893, the land where Rugby was located was owned by Thomas Wray. This also documents the village did exist in 1893.

Ghost Towns of Livingston County

I previously made and gave a presentation about the ghost towns of the 58 ghost towns in Livingston County. Below is the 1 page of info I had about Rugby. Post office dates came from a web page with all post office information (detailed source is in the ghost town presentation). The text info came from the 1909 Vol. 2 Livingston County history book.



Rugby – Post Office – 1880-1918

- 1909 Vol. 2 history book
- The Illinois Central has sixty-two miles of its road in Livingston County.
- The Kankakee branch, or Middle Division, extends through the center of the county from east to west, thirty-six miles.
- The stations on this line are Flanagan, Graymont, Rooks Creek, Pontiac, Swygert, **Rugby**, Eylar, Spires, Scovel and Griswold
- Rugby is located on the Illinois Central road, in Owego Township, eight miles east of Pontiac.
- It has but one store, and a grain elevator.

The Swygert slide is shown below because it mentions Rugby.



Swygert – Post Office – 1880-1916

- From the 1909 Vol. 2 history book...
- VILLAGE OF SWYGERT.
 - Swygert is located on the Illinois Central road, in Owego Township, five miles east of Pontiac.
 - Besides a general store, it has a grain elevator.
 - The Owego Baptist church is located here.
- The Illinois Central has sixty-two miles of its road in Livingston County. The Kankakee branch, or Middle Division, extends through the center of the county from east to west, thirty-six miles.
- The stations on this line are Flanagan, Graymont, Rooks Creek, Pontiac, Swygert, Rugby, Eylar, Spires, Scovel and Griswold.

Andrew Hale not Mentioned in 1878 Livingston County History Book

No mentions.

Andrew Hale not Mentioned in 1888 Livingston County History Book

No mentions.

Andrew Hale not Mentioned in 1900 Livingston County History Book

No mentions.

Andrew Hale not Mentioned in 1909 Vol. 2 Livingston County History Book

No mentions.

When and Where was Rugby Invented?

<https://hanazono-rugby-hos.com/museum-en/origins/>

William Webb Ellis,
the inventor of rugby football

In November of 1823 at Rugby School, an independent school in England, a boy named William Webb Ellis, gripped by a great rush of enthusiasm while playing football, began to run toward the opposing team's goal but holding the ball in his arms, ignoring the basic 'no-hands' rule of football. Ellis was said to be the first person to perform such an absurd move, but it led to the subsequent establishment of rugby football.

Rugby school,
the birthplace of rugby football

Rugby School is located in Warwickshire, 100 miles northwest of London. This prestigious elite school was founded in 1567, has a long history and tradition, and has produced many star players.

Thomas Wray Mentioned in 1878 Livingston County History Book

which he aims to have of the breed.

THOMAS WRAY, farming, Sec. 29; P. O. Dana; was born in Carlisle, Eng., Aug. 19, 1821. He married Miss Jane Dykes, Dec. 14, 1848; she was born in England, and died Dec. 23, 1866; they had eight children, seven living—George L., John W., Lewis T., James M., Robert L., Sarah C. and Mary F.; his present wife was Mrs. Beamer (formerly Miss Emily Chapin); they were married Oct. 1, 1867; she was born in Steuben Co., N. Y., Feb. 10, 1833; they have three children—Dolly E., Burton L. and Arthur B.; Mrs. Wray has six children living by former marriage—Eva J., Harriet E., Jason W., Jane L., Lewis L. and Sherman. He lived two years in England, when with his parents he came to the United States and located in Philadelphia, remaining eleven years; then to Washington Co., Penn., remaining three years; then to Putnam Co., Ill., where his mother died; remained two years, then went to La Salle Co., remaining five years, where his father died; and in 1857, he came to Livingston Co., and settled on his present place. He started in poor circumstances, and now owns 120 acres in this township.

Carlisle is 230 miles north of Warwickshire, England, so he was not born in same town. He was born 2 years before rugby was invented.

No mention in 1888, 1900, history book about Thomas Wray.

1909 history book...was pioneer settler in Long Point area.

justice of the peace for more than twenty years.

Among others who located here in the '50s were Isaac Ramsey, Stephen Coleman, John Moulds, John Minard, Frederick Girard and sons, Herman and Albert, M. L. Stratton, William Howell, O. M. Alden, Erastus Eaton, William Eaton, Orlando Chubbuck, Harvey Winser, A. J. Bosserman, John Cooper, John Dykes, A. J. Ewart and sons, Josiah, Joseph and James, A. J. Roberts, Thomas Wray, James Worlds, M. Van Fleet. Among the arrivals in the 60's were John W. Hart, John H. Colehower, J. F. Smith, S. D. Carson, James B. Phillips, Andrew Raub, S. Martine, Leonard Wetz, Theodore Stevenson, James Bradbury.

1908 Historical Encyclopedia of Illinois Mentions a Man who owned land in Rugby

STEPHENS, Abraham.—Half a century of faithful, unremitting toil, pretty evenly divided between the honest trade of a carpenter and the equally honorable science of agriculture, entitles one to a few years of rest and recreation, and there is, consequently, no envy intermingled with the admiration with which the people of Yates Township view the lifework of Abraham Stephens, who is now passing his declining years in comfort and peace on his magnificent farm of 400 acres in this section of McLean County. He is nearing his eighty-first year, and, although still hale for his age, the results of his skilled work in two distinct fields of life have enabled him to pass in retirement the period since 1891, when he carefully placed on younger shoulders the conduct of his farm and other property.

Abraham Stephens is a native of Broome County, N. Y., born on November 10, 1826, the son of Obadiah Stephens, a New Jersey man and by trade a carpenter and contractor. The elder Stephens erected many buildings in that county, and died at Hyde Settlement about 1865, being the father of four daughters and two sons. Abraham, the fourth of the family, learned his father's trade and, like most enterprising sons of the East, at the age of twenty-one left home to work out a career for himself. He first went to Addison, N. Y., where he was employed for a season, afterward building the first bridge at Portage. For a number of years later, he worked on the lines of the Erie and New York Central

Railroads, his chief employment with the latter being the construction of bridges, at one time being boss contractor on the main line between Buffalo and Syracuse. He came west in 1854, first locating at Oneida, Knox County, Ill., where, among other contracts, he had charge of the construction of a large mill and a church. Soon afterward he bought a farm in that section and in 1868 purchased 160 acres of unimproved land, the southeast quarter section adjoining the Village of Weston on the north. While he was building his residence he lived on an adjoining place, and afterward judiciously improved his property in other ways, also adding to his original purchase until he owned 400 acres in Livingston and McLean Counties in a body, and it could be compared favorably with any other homestead in the vicinity. At the time of his retirement from general farming, in 1891, he also was the owner of 154 acres in section 4, that township and of 160 acres in Everett's Point Township, Livingston County, that State. He is also in possession of a half-section of improved land at Piper City, Ford County, Ill., which he rents; of 182 acres in Story County, Iowa; eighty acres one mile north of Fairbury; 204 acres five miles from Wing; a farm of 160 acres at Rugby, and a seventy-two acre farm near Colchester, McDonough County. In all, he owns the comfortable total of 1500 acres of land, most of it highly improved and valuable. Consequently Mr. Stephens can well afford to retire and enjoy life.

Woodhull, N. Y., until the death of her husband, October 18, 1879. Of their three children, Miner C. is a resident of Elmira, N. Y.; Stephen G. died in infancy, and Howard H., also of Elmira, is with the hardware company of Barker, Rose & Clinton of that city. On March 12, 1895, the widow married as her second husband A. F. Chapman. Mrs. Chapman's parents were S. V. R. and Louisa (Smith) Gloyd, who for many years resided in Macomb, McDonough County, Ill., where their remains are buried.

anora to retire and enjoy life.

On December 10, 1856, Abraham Stephens was wedded to Sarah Ann Gloyd, who was born in Plainfield, Hampshire County, Mass., on August 18, 1828. In 1848 she moved with her parents to New York State, and was married at Rathbone, that State, dying of paralysis at Weston, Ill., on June 14, 1905. Mrs. Stephens was buried at Fairbury, Ill., where, at a great expense, Mr. Stephens erected a beautiful monument. The deceased was a member of the Baptist Church and a good, conscientious woman. The marriage was childless. Since 1892, the wife's sister, H. Ellen Gloyd, has resided with Mr. Stephens.

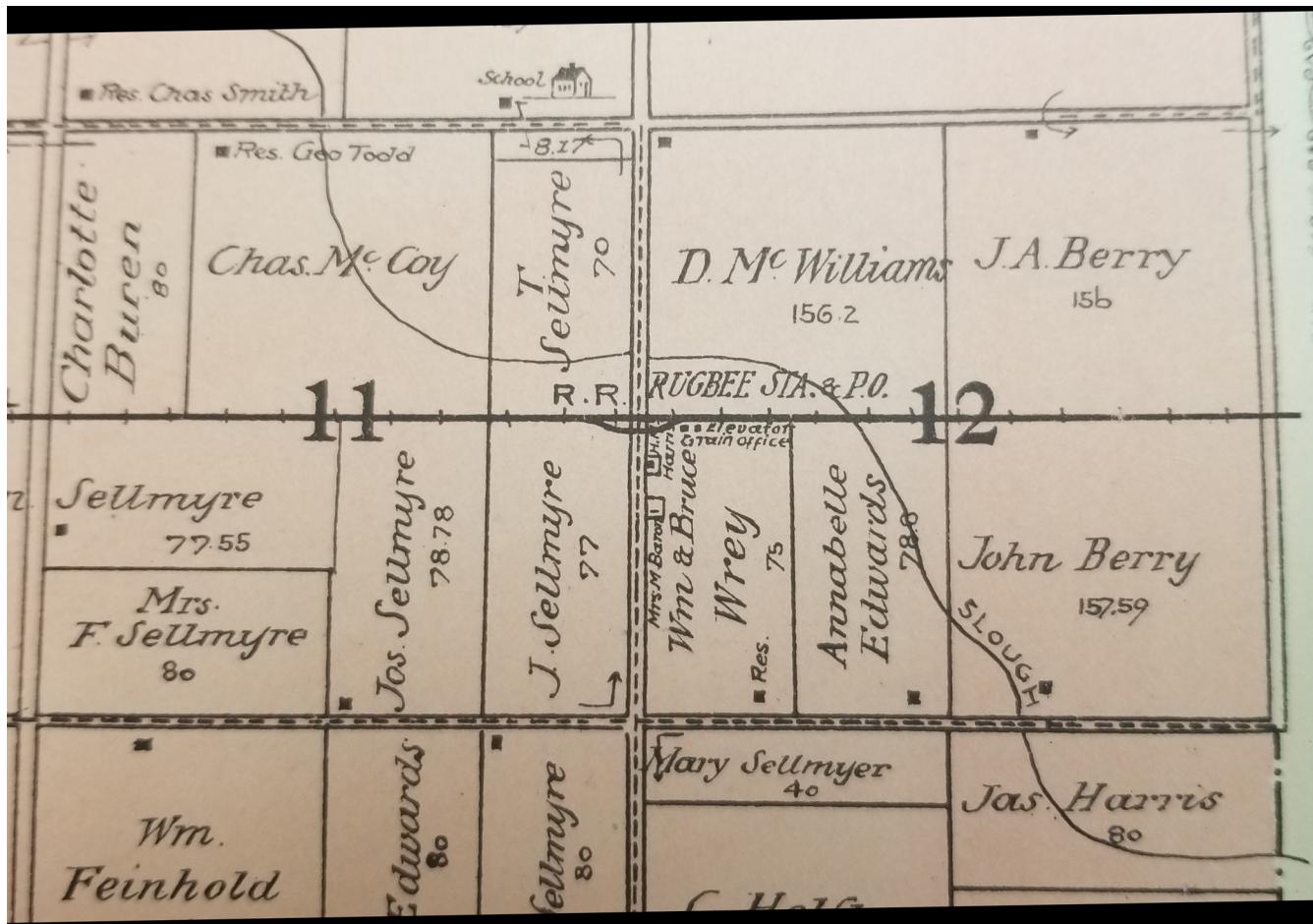
Mrs. Stephens' parents were Stephen and Huldah (Millard) Gloyd, the father born at Plainfield, Mass., March 9, 1792, and the mother at Duaneburg, N. Y., September 1, 1800. Their marriage occurred December 6, 1818, in the bride's native town. Mr. Gloyd was a man of superior ability and standing, and for two years served in the Massachusetts State Legislature. He died April 19, 1865, the widow surviving him until September 5, 1887, when she too passed away. Their children were: Joel M., born in 1819, who died June 29, 1896; Amelia; Stephen V. R.; Sarah Ann, Mrs. Abraham Stephens; Benjamin F.; Delos W. H., Ellen and Julius.

Mary Ella Gloyd (a daughter of Mr. Stephen's brother-in-law, who has been housekeeper since 1902) married Dr. M. C. Kimball on September 20, 1876, at Macomb, Ill., and resided at

No Fancy Stone at Fairbury's Graceland Cemetery for his Wife

I checked and it is a modest, modern looking stone. Maybe the original stone was fancy and it wore away and got replaced by a more modern one?

Rugby in 1913 Atlas of Livingston County



Livingston County WWI Book published circa 1922

A veteran was from Rugby, Illinois.

CADY, IVAN GARDNER, Rugby, Illinois. Born July 8, 1888, Camden, Illinois. Grain buyer. Inducted June 24, 1918, Pontiac, Illinois. To Camp Wheeler, Georgia. Pvt., Co. I, 124 Inf., 31 Div. Transferred to 42 Bn., U. S. Guards, Camp Shelby, Mississippi ; to Camp Waco, Georgia ; to Camp Gordon, Georgia; to Camp Grant, Illinois. Promoted to Cpl., October 14, 1918. Discharged January 2, 1919, Camp Grant.

He likely worked at the Rugby grain elevator on the tracks.

1904 Pantagraph mention of Rugby, Illinois

Rugby - Mr. and Mrs. Bruce Wrey spent Sunday in Saunemin.[April 29, 1904 - Bloomington Weekly Pantagraph; Sub by Pam Haag Geyer]

June 8, 1888, Pantagraph mention of Rugby, Illinois

PONTIAC.

—Miss Lou Alexander, of Chicago, is visiting at D. M. Legg's.

—Harvey Riggs has reshingled and remodeled his house near the C. & A. depot.

—E. B. Park is setting out several acres in tobacco plants. He is the only one who has tried it in this region.

—Bailey Gore, one of Odell's thrifty farmers, was in town Thursday and took home a new canopy top surrey.

—Farmers report the best prospects for oats, but that in the low places corn has been drowned out and has to be replanted.

—Mr. Kintare, of Haverhill, Mass., has just arrived and will at once take charge of the finishing department at the Reform school shoe shop.

—Mrs. George Berry, of **Rugby**, was in town Tuesday, and treated **herself** to one of John S. Murphy & Co.'s finest gold watches and a chain.

Nov. 23, 1888, Pantagraph

PUBLIC SALE OF STOCK—I will sell at my residence, 1 mile north of Rugby, in Owego township, commencing at 8:30 o'clock a. m., on

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 27, 1888,

The following property, to wit:

SIXTEEN HEAD HORSES AND MULES, consisting of 4 good brood mares, in foal by an imported Norman; 3 half-blood Norman mares, also bred to an imported Norman; 2 half-blood 3-year-old Norman horses; 4 half-blood Norman horses, 1 half-blood Norman yearling, 1 Norman spring colt, 2 good work mules.

SEVENTY-ONE HEAD CATTLE—One 2-year-old Hereford bull, ten cows, forty 2-year-old steers, ten 3-year-old steers and ten 2-year-old heifers.

SHEEP—Four hundred and thirty-seven head of sheep: 300 ewes, bred to Shropshire bucks; 125 spring lambs, 10 Merino bucks, 2 Shropshire bucks.

One thousand bushels corn in crib, 1 spring wagon, 1 buggy, several sets of harness, 1 seeder, and a general line of farming implements; also a good lot of household furniture, consisting of parlor sets, carpets, stoves, etc., etc.

Lunch will be served at 12:30 o'clock p. m.

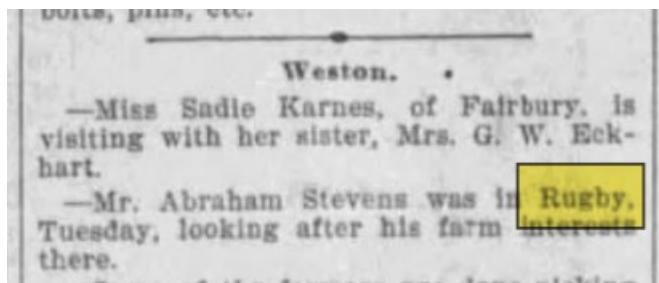
TERMS OF SALE—All sums of \$5 or under, cash. All sums over \$5, a credit of 12 months will be given, purchaser giving notes with approved security, without interest if paid when due. If not paid at maturity, interest at the rate of 8 per cent will be charged from date of sale. No property to be removed until terms of sale are complied with.

A. LATHAM.

C. K. BRITTEHAM, Auct.

n216t-471t

Nov. 3, 1899, Pantagraph



Nov 3, 1900, Gibson City Courier

first number is newsy and well edited.

—Mrs. E. Langford spent two or three days with her husband, who, with his brother, G. W. Langford, is just opening a store at Kankakee. The opening of the store was delayed by the sudden death of M. W. Bacon of Rugby, Ill., a son-in-law of G. W. Langford, last Friday evening.

—Remember W. S. Lamb & Co. has one



1 of 2 matches

Washing Machine Factory.

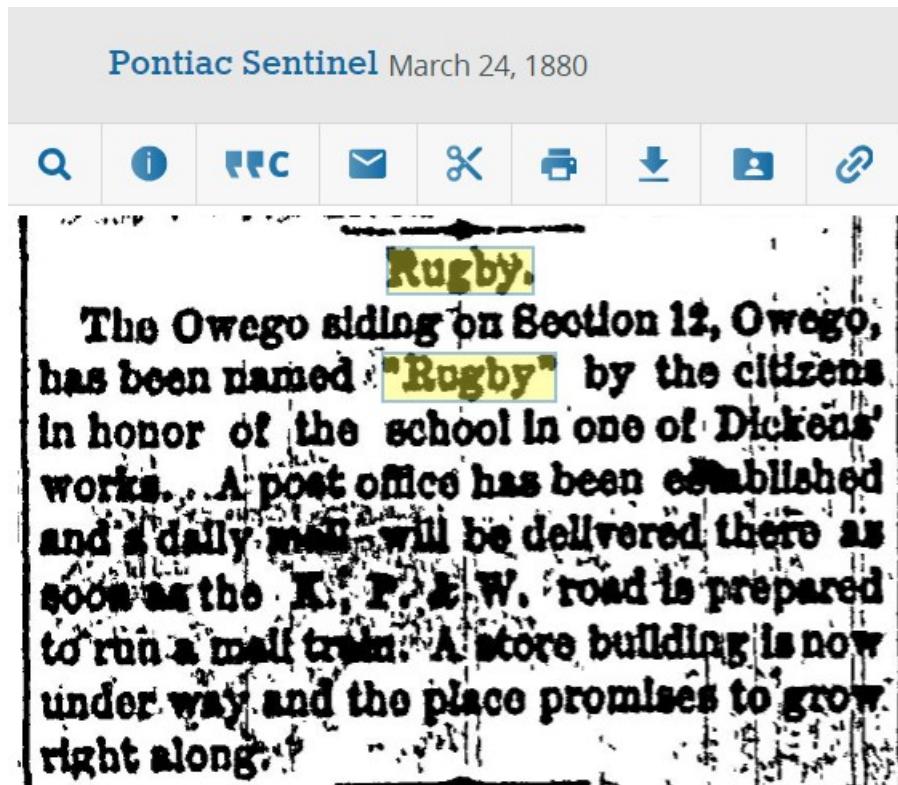
A new industry has been started in this city on a small scale. It is a washing machine factory. G. W. Wood has engaged in the manufacture of the Lamson washing machines, having secured the sole right to manufacture in this state. Mr. Wood is using his two-story frame shop on the corner of First and Church streets, built on Lake Erie ground, for this purpose. The building is $22\frac{1}{2}$ by 36 feet, rather too small for a large business, but suitable for a modest beginning. Mr. Wood has the lower room fitted up with planers, lathes, saws, etc., operated by a 10-horse power engine. He has a quantity of lumber on hand, oak and poplar, and is now engaged in the manufacture of machines, expecting to turn out 100 machines by spring. G. W. Langford of Rugby, Ill., who is here this week, is also interested in this venture, controlling the patent right, and he will probably assist in putting them on the market. This machine has been a remarkable seller wherever it has been shown, and Mr. Wood thinks it has a promising future. In addition to the manufacture of washing machines, Mr. Wood will do a general carpentry shop and milling business. He is already planning an addition to his building this summer, and he expects eventually to employ several hands in his shops.

Gibson City Courier
Fri, Jan 24, 1902 · Page 6

the 1904 Pantagraph had a regular short column about life in Rugby, Illinois. Several articles.

March 24, 1880, Pontiac, Sentinel

Pontiac Sentinel March 24, 1880



Rugby.

The Owego siding on Section 12, Owego, has been named "Rugby" by the citizens in honor of the school in one of Dickens' works... A post office has been established and a daily mail will be delivered there as soon as the K. P. & W. road is prepared to run a mail train. A store building is now under way and the place promises to grow right along.

Pontiac Sentinel Newspaper

It has many articles and references to Rugby.

Archives available through the Pontiac public library.

